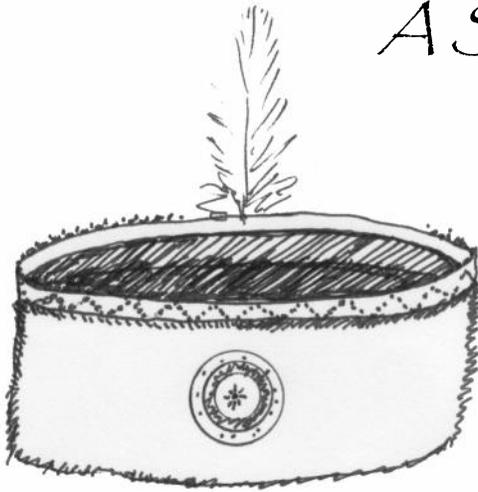


# A SIMPLE OTTER CAP

By Jerry Smith  
Chief, 1959-60



The otter cap illustrated here is a simplified version worn by the Osage chiefs\*. It is simply a band of fur adorned by a decorative ribbon band at the top. The cap was then "topped off" with a simple medallion in the front and a feather in the back.

## MATERIALS NEEDED:

1. Navy blue or red wool
2. Buckrum (a very stiff woven backing sold in fabric stores)
3. Fake fur that looks like otter (short, uniform, dark-brown hair).
4. Seed beads (white, yellow or light blue) - to be used as decoration.
5. Taffeta yardage ribbon of a mid intensity color (red, wine, purple, teal). Select color to contrast with the color of seed beads and the dark brown fur.

## MAKING THE CAP

Once you have the materials, start by measuring the circumference of your head. The finished cap should fit tightly around the head because it could slide down on your ears as the dance progresses and the head starts to sweat.

Cut out the materials: The length will be the head circumference plus  $\frac{1}{4}$ ".

1. Buckrum -  $4\frac{1}{2}$ " wide
2. Wool - twice as wide as the Buckrum (9")
3. Yardage taffeta ribbon -  $2\frac{3}{4}$ " wide, but 1" longer than the head circumference.

Now Iron folds in the taffeta ribbon to make a binding that is about  $\frac{3}{4}$ " wide. Fold the

wool in half with the iron. Insert the Buckrum between the folded wool and bind the open edges with the taffeta ribbon using a standard straight stitch on the sewing machine. Form this into a ring, overlapping the ends about  $\frac{1}{4}$ ". Pin in place and try on the cap! Make sure it is a snug fit. Adjust as needed. See diagram A & B.

Next, sew the overlapping ends together using a wide zigzag stitch with a thread color that matches the wool, either red or navy blue. Don't sew down the ribbon binding until last. To make a nice finished edge, fold the edges under and use a straight stitch or finish by hand.

At this point it is best if you add the bead decoration: the edge-beading and the "triangle-style" lazy stitch, to the ribbon binding. Do the beadwork on the ribbon binding before attaching the fur so the bead thread doesn't get caught-up in the fur each time you pull it through. See diagram C.

Form the fur around the cap and blind stitch it in place. The fur can also be glued in place with contact cement or a hot glue gun.

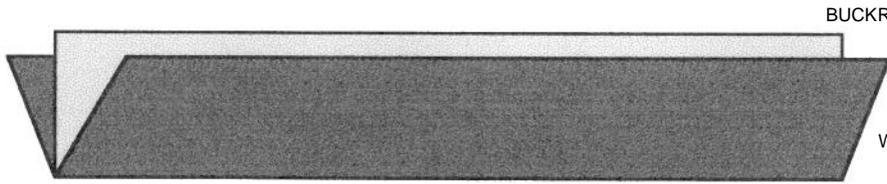
Add the beaded medallion, painted rawhide decoration, or German silver pin to the front of the cap and attach a feather or major plum (big fluff) to the back and your cap is ready to wear!

\*Kiowa, Pawnee, Comanche and other tribes wear similar caps with an otter tail hanging from the back. This can be added easily by using the same construction technique and decorated in the same way.



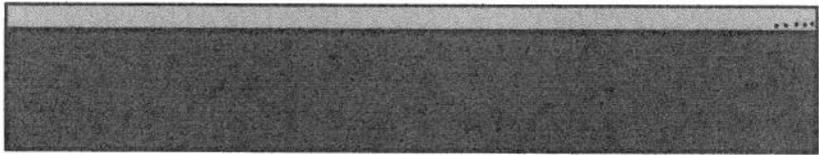


FAKE FUR

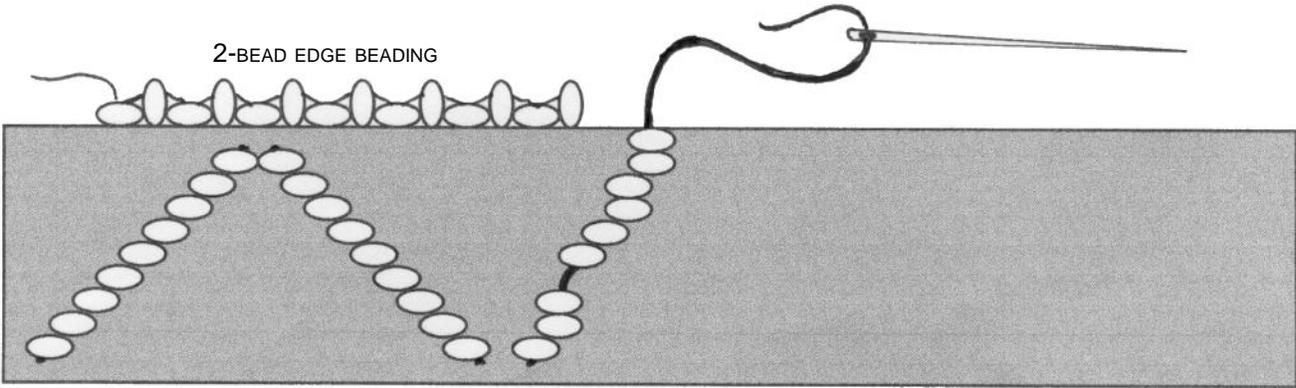


BUCKRUM

WOOL FOLDED  
IN HALF



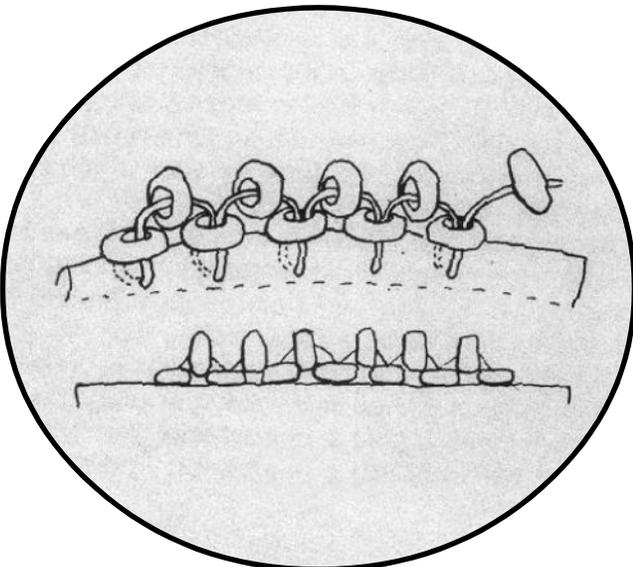
← TAFFETA RIBBON BINDING  
OVER BUCKRUM/WOOL PIECE



2-BEAD EDGE BEADING

"TRIANGE STYLE" LAZY STITCH

DETAIL OF 2-BEAD EDGE BEADING



*Illustration of an otter cap with 1-inch "F" pattern ribbonwork band at top and German silver bearpaw decoration on the front.*